

**GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM**

January 5, 2006

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Nothing is more important than the safety of our children. And this New Year, law enforcement officers, school officials and parents in Michigan are armed with new laws to keep sexual predators away from our children, and to keep our children safe from harm.

Last year I called for and signed tough, bipartisan legislation to protect children from sex offenders, whether they're on the school playground, at the school bus, or at day care centers across the state.

I said at the time that I had three goals: to know that sex offenders are nowhere near our children; to engage citizens to be vigilant about protecting our kids; and to put new penalties in place that show sex offenders we mean business.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> new measures took affect that accomplish these goals.

We've created a 1,000 foot safety zone around our schools, shielding students and prohibiting sexual predators from working in, near, or loitering outside school buildings.

We now require criminal background checks for those who operate group day care homes, child care and day care centers.

We now have laws on the books that allow us to vigorously and effectively prosecute sexual predators.

And the package of bills I signed also includes new requirements for people already on the state's Sex Offender Registry, requiring them to notify authorities immediately upon relocating or face stiff penalties for failing to do so.

In 2006, we are working to make children in Michigan safer than ever before. And I want to applaud the Legislature for taking quick action on my proposals to put these important laws on the books.

Thank you for listening.